

The President's Daily Brief

18 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

19 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
18 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Czechoslovakia remained quiet through the night.

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There is nothing significant to report on Europe, Vietnam,
or the Middle East.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

The North Koreans have not yet commented directly on
President Nixon's announcement that reconnaissance flights
will be resumed with adequate protection. A Pyongyang domes-
tic broadcast last night, however, pledged that the Korean
people "will in the future, too, mete out severe punishment
to aggressors who infringe upon the sovereignty of our coun-
try."

We have observed no indications that North Korean forces
are preparing for offensive action. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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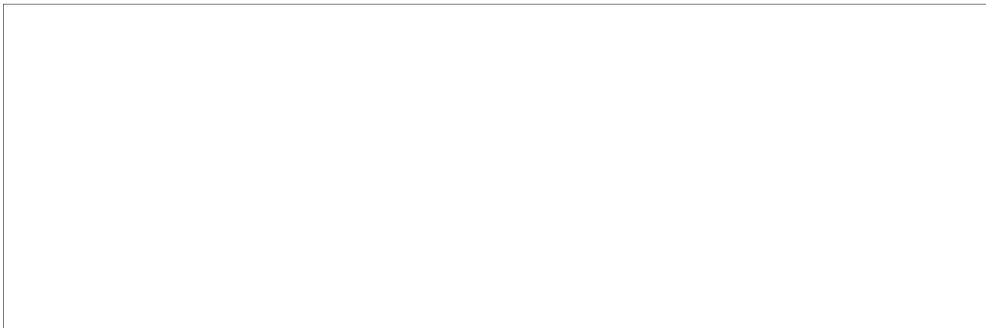
(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 19 Apr)

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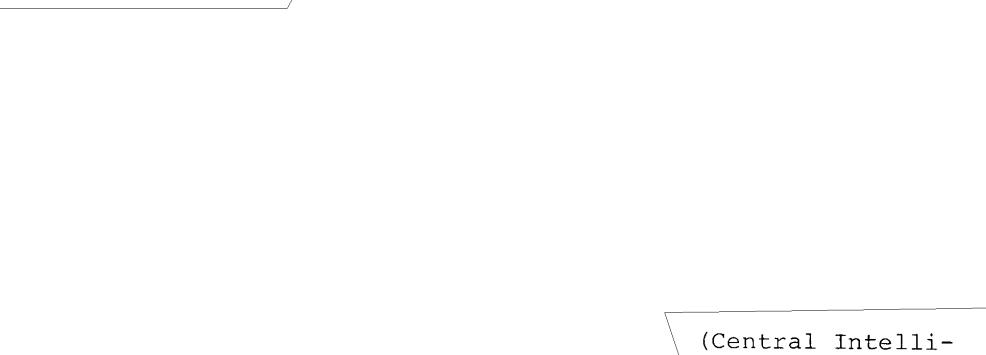


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South Korea has not yet commented officially on the President's press conference, but the first unofficial reactions are mixed.

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gence Bulletin, 19 Apr)

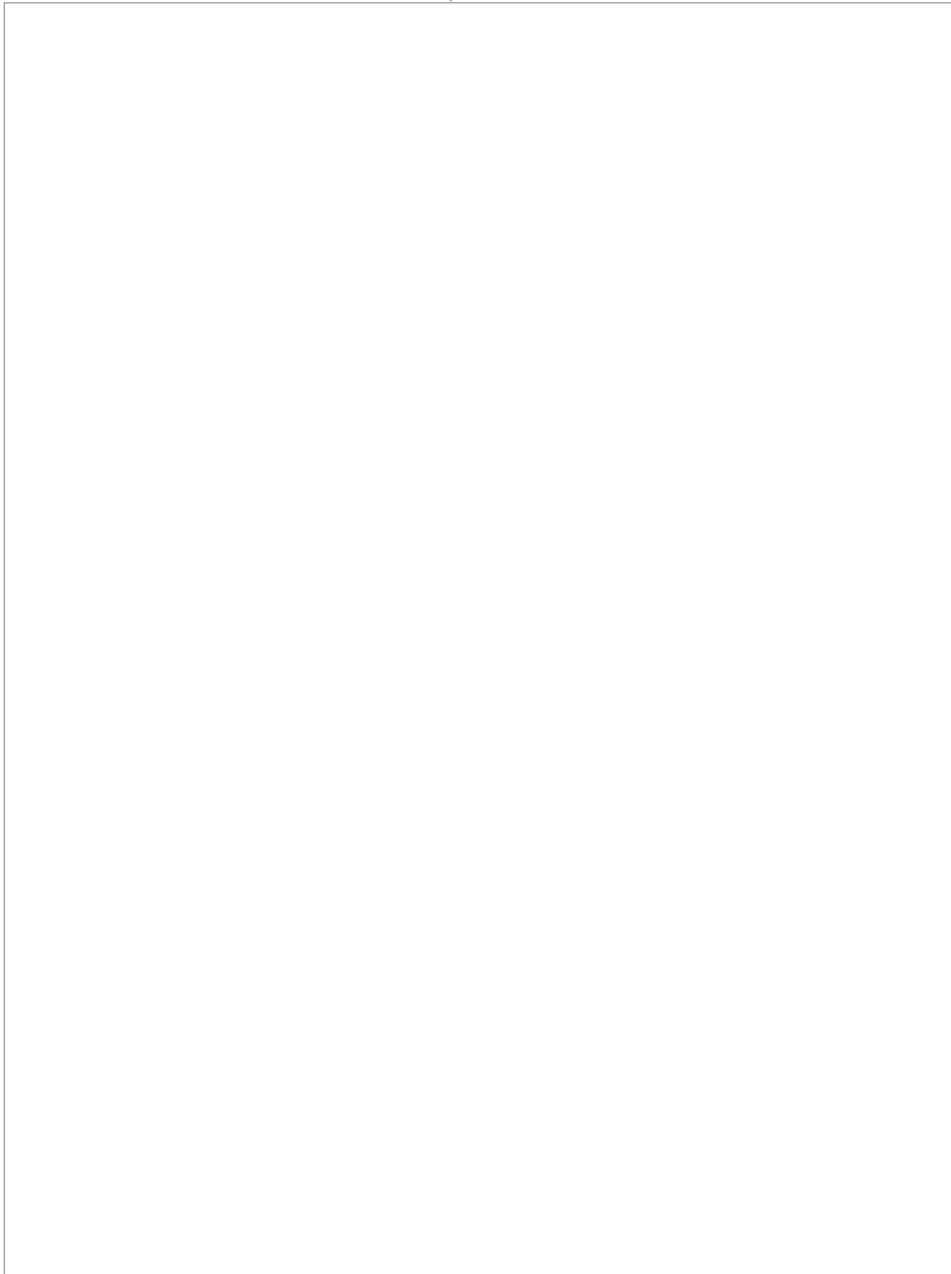
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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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EUROPE

Franz-Josef Strauss tried a variation or two on some old themes in his talk yesterday with the US chargé. The subject was the nonproliferation treaty, and Strauss warned that Chancellor Kiesinger would be provoking a crisis in the Grand Coalition if he tried to force a decision on the signing of the NPT. He left the chargé with the impression that he might resign or otherwise provoke a crisis to prevent the treaty's signature. Moreover, Strauss added, he did not think the Nixon administration attached as much urgency to West German signature of the treaty as its predecessor had.

The cabinet will meet Wednesday in Bonn, and we assume the NPT will be one of the topics. Given Kiesinger's tendency to temporize on any issue when he lacks a consensus, Strauss probably could indeed force a further extension of the decision-making process ~~or~~ ^{by} remaining intransigent. And a decision will be progressively harder to reach as next fall's elections come closer. One high-ranking German official, in fact, told the chargé today that he thought West Germany probably would not sign the treaty before the elections. The thoughts Strauss expressed to the chargé strongly suggest he thinks he has a good hand on this issue and will play it to the hilt.

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Strauss' comments on the US administration's attitude are something of a comedown from his previous pronouncements. Initially he tried to draw parallels between his opposition to the treaty and the Nixon administration's allegedly reserved attitude. Since the US Senate's ratification, he has been reduced to an assertion that the administration is lukewarm about West German adherence.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Prague has been calm today. Strong security forces, including some military units, continue to patrol the city.

Dubcek will become president of the National Assembly. While this announcement obviously was intended to take some of the sting out of his demotion, it looks like another step down the road to political oblivion.

Gustav Husak, the new party first secretary, moved quickly toward silencing what dissident notes linger in the press by naming a pro-Soviet conservative as editor-in-chief of the main party newspaper.

Brezhnev has sent his congratulations to Husak and Soviet President Podgorny told Ambassador Beam that the Czechoslovak plenum had "initiated steps" which would be satisfactory "to the whole world."

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VIETNAM

There are tenuous indications in communications intercepts that the flow of new infiltration groups from North Vietnam may resume in the near future. Some message traffic suggests that a period of refurbishment within the infiltration pipeline may be drawing to a close, and an incomplete [redacted] report notes the detection of a possible new group on the move within the North Vietnamese panhandle.

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Fragmentary reports intercepted during the past month have indicated that some of the stations along the infiltration route in North Vietnam and Laos were being relocated or were improving their facilities. These relocations were relatively minor and were usually described as being "within 45 minutes or less"--presumably of walking time--from the original site. It is possible that movements of this sort are undertaken periodically by infiltration stations for reasons of security, concealment, or sanitation.

Coincident with this possible improvement effort within the infiltration pipeline has been the absence of reports indicating that new units were being dispatched from North Vietnam. No reliable evidence of fresh troop deployments has been received since 22 March. We think it unlikely that the Communists have instituted some new communications system which is masking the formation of infiltrator groups in North Vietnam.

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The most probable explanation for the failure to detect any new units in the past four weeks is that the Communists have temporarily satisfied their troop requirements in the South and have instituted a standdown in new infiltration in order to refurbish the heavily used facilities along the trails from North Vietnam. If the enemy intends to renew large-scale offensive activity in South Vietnam early this summer, as is suggested by a growing body of evidence, it is likely that the deployment of new manpower from North Vietnam will soon be resumed.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA

The ninth party congress has now been meeting for nearly three weeks, but Peking has still divulged precious little about what is going on. The "interim" communique issued on 14 April said the first two items on the agenda-- adoption of a new party constitution and endorsement of a "political report" by Mao's heir, Lin Piao--had been approved unanimously. However, no speeches delivered at the congress were made public.

The communique also announced that discussion of the third and final item on the agenda, the election of a new central committee, was to begin on 15 April. This is perhaps the most important and controversial matter before the congress. It may well be that the session has bogged down on the issue. Earlier, there had been numerous signs that the congress was to have finished its work before the middle of the month.

We expect to get a better line on developments at the congress after it adjourns, when at least some material, including the new constitution, a version of Lin's speech, and the new central committee list will almost certainly be published.

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